

**Testimony Before the House Subcommittee on Finance and Hazardous
Materials**

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INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Ken Zirkle, and I am the President of The University of Findlay located in Findlay, Ohio. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today, and offer my help in making Superfund cleanups run more efficiently.

We have all heard of the inefficiencies of the current Superfund program and how the program is “broken:. Over the past 15 years, billions have been spent on Superfund with little to show for it. The University of Findlay today proposes a solution which will lead to more expeditious cleanup for these valuable Superfund dollars.

The core of the problem is lack of environmental management training. EPA environmental managers lack the training to run an effective cleanup at

National Priority List (NPL) sites. Creating a National Center of Excellence for Environmental Management Training and Education will get to the root of this problem and give these managers the skills needed to run an efficient cleanup program.

It is a known fact that private sector cleanups are faster and more cost effective than government cleanups. However, using private sector management training skills as a model, the University of Findlay can develop a training program for government environmental managers that can help Superfund, Brownfields, DOD, DOE, and Voluntary Cleanups approach the same efficient rate as private-sector cleanups.

BACKGROUND ON UF

The University of Findlay is the nation's leader in Environmental Management Training and Education since 1986. Over 300 students have graduated from our bachelors degree program, and are now successfully managing various private and public sector environmental projects across the US. We now provide a "seamless" education through certificate, associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree levels.

In addition, we opened The Environmental Resource Training Center (ERTC) in 1989. The ERTC, as its called, has provided one-to-five-day environmental, health and safety workshops at our two “hands-on” training centers in Findlay, Ohio, to over 10,000 people from 43 states, Canada, Puerto Rico and six foreign countries. In addition, the ERTC has conducted custom designed training programs for an additional 7,000 people at their facilities in 45 states. Clients have included DOE facilities in Ohio, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas, and DOD locations such as Brooks AFB in Texas, Nellis AFB in Nevada, Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio, Malmstrom AFB in Montana, as well as a host of private sector clients, including Ford Motor Company, Roadway Express, LTV Steel, and BP Oil.

We also have a close working relationship with OHM Remediation Services, Corp., a worldwide environmental remediation contractor. This relationship includes environmental training and education, internships, summer work experiences, full time employment of graduates, and other joint ventures.

IMPROVING MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

As you know, the private sector generally spends less than 10% of its budget on administrative management of cleanup projects, with the remaining 90% spent on actual site cleanup. Historically, the EPA spends only an estimated 45% of its Superfund funding on actual cleanup activities. This is due in part to the fact that government-managed cleanups have to deal with more prevailing wage, bonding, administrative QA/QC, federal acquisition and procurement guidelines, and small and minority owned business requirement issues than do private sector cleanups. These issues, while very important and necessary, do lead to increased administrative cost.

The answer is environmental management education and training, which will certainly play a key role in reducing these costs by implementing many practical and successful management techniques currently utilized to streamline the cost effectiveness of private sector cleanups.

For example, four years ago, we developed a Master of Science Degree in Environmental Management, which allowed us to take our existing private sector environmental management knowledge and implement it in the public sector. Our masters degree is a blend of Environmental Engineering, Environmental science, and Business administration. We patterned this

program around the DOE's Workforce Restructuring Plan, which focuses on training DOE employees to improve their environmental management and site cleanup skills. To date, 28 Fernald employees have graduated from UF's Environmental Management Masters Program. They are now implementing the management knowledge that they have gained to improve the effectiveness of the cleanup operations currently underway at Fernald.

Our courses in this specially designed Master of Environmental Management program are proactive, and include Environmental Remediation Techniques, Environmental Planning, Environmental Accounting and Finance, and Environmental Auditing. But three primary courses form the core of this program. They are Environmental Project Management, Environmental Calculations and Environmental Risk Assessment.

The project management course not only teaches traditional schedule, scope and budget, but also teaches getting the most from people, equipment and resources, thereby maximizing performance with the resources available.

The calculations course focuses on analytical problem solving, and changes the students thinking process to analyze their plight and arrive at a logical and economical solution. Risk management requires the application of statistics

and probability to improve management decision making. Findlay graduates are environmental managers who think through the problem and evaluate the risk, then apply cost benefit analysis to the betterment of our environment. In short, mastery of these key environmental management skills will help government managers do their jobs more efficiently and cost effectively.

We are currently offering the Master's in Environmental Management at the DOE sites in Fernald, Piketon, and Mound, as well as six other locations around the State of Ohio.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Can these successful environmental management education and training programs be effectively offered not only throughout Ohio, but nationwide as well? Yes they can! Through the development of specially targeted, and custom designed training modules patterned after programs such as our Master's in Environmental Management Degree, environmental management courses can be delivered through a combination of traditional classroom and distance learning techniques.

One potential mode of delivery is through cooperative arrangement with existing two year community college programs such as The Community College Network (C2NET), an affiliated group of 20 community colleges across the US directly associated with DOE facilities in their particular geographic area. And the Partnership for Environmental Training and Education (PETE), an association of approximately 75 two year community colleges across the country, currently offering some form of environmental education program. The University of Findlay currently has existing relationships with both of these community college associations.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, we can improve the pace of environmental cleanups if we have congress's help in developing the National Center of Excellence for Environmental Management Training and Education. The model for this center currently exists. Environmental management training and education has already had a successful impact on government managed cleanup sites in Ohio, and they can be effectively delivered nationwide through traditional classroom and various distance learning techniques.

With the President's 1998 proposed 50% increase in Superfund spending, we must ensure that these valuable dollars are not wasted on excessive administration, oversight, support, assessment, monitoring and other non-cleanup activities. Environmental management training will give EPA managers the tools to minimize these non-cleanup expenditures and maximize the cleanup.

We look forward to working closely with the Committee and the Administration, and we stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Thank you for the privilege of testifying on this important issue today, and I look forward to your questions.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS

Current Superfund program is inefficient.

- Core Problem is the lack of Environmental Management Training.
- Private-sector cleanups are faster and more cost effective than government cleanups.
- Private-sector management skills need to be used as a model to develop training programs for Government Environmental Managers.
- Many of these needed training programs already exist through The University of Findlay's Master of Science in Environmental Management Degree.
- Environmental Management training can be offered nationwide through traditional classroom and various distance learning techniques.
- With President Clinton's 1998 proposed 50% increase in Superfund spending, we must ensure that these valuable dollars are not wasted on excessive administration and oversight.
- Creation of a National Center of Excellence for Environmental Management Training and Education is a realistic solution, and will give government managers the skills they need.